

APPENDIX F

Focus Group Summary - Local Library Directors

Forty-nine library directors participated in focus group sessions across the State of Tennessee. The sessions were held in conjunction with the trustee workshops, which were held in Sevierville (encompassing libraries from Watauga, Nolichucky and Clinch Powell Regions), Crossville (encompassing libraries from Fort Loudoun, Upper Cumberland, and Caney Fork Regions), Clarksville (encompassing libraries from Warioto, Highland Rim, and Blue Grass Regions), and Jackson (encompassing libraries from Forked Deer, Shiloh, and Reelfoot Regions).

Summary of Key Points:

- There are wide variations among Tennessee public libraries in terms of their funding and support, the areas they serve, and their needs.
- Access to a professional librarian is crucial, a core regional service.
- Having the regional director attend local library board meetings, while not important to all libraries, is especially important to those libraries without an MLS degreed person as their director, especially in terms of supporting the library director in working with the library board and city or county officials.
- Regionals facilitate networking and keep librarians from feeling remote and alone. Some directors worry about getting lost in a bigger regional.
- Technology support is growing in importance. This includes training, technical assistance, and keeping libraries up to date.
- Staff training is also very important. Some feel the face to face training is more effective than webinars.
- The need for regional centers to provide ordering, cataloging, and processing services varies widely. Many of the small library directors said they did not have the staff to handle these services. A few commented that they did not have the physical space to perform the activity.
- Outreach is defined differently by libraries across the state. Some think of it in terms of servicing deposit collections in remote locations, in day cares, and senior centers; others think of it as programming, specifically children's summer programs and performers.
- Criteria for determining the size of a regional include: travel time, number of libraries served, and the extent of the professional training held by library directors.
- Regional centers should be centrally located within their region.
- Regional directors could divide statewide responsibilities. One or two could deal with capital fundraising, etc. to share that information statewide. Teleconferencing centers funded by the state could be located in areas without a lot of technology. That could happen at a library rather than a regional office.

Notes from each of the sessions follow.

Sevierville October 18th

There were 13 participants in this session from libraries in the Watauga, Nolichucky and Clinch Powell Regions. They represented a wide variety of libraries, those serving very small rural communities, county libraries, multi-facility libraries, and single facility county libraries.

Why does Tennessee have regionals? What's their purpose?

Provide service we couldn't afford; provide computer server

Give us direct contact to the state; conduit for information

Professional support, you can go to them with questions and for support with funding authorities.

Also connect us to other librarians in the region

Provide continuing education and workshops; also do a lot of cataloging, processing

Our libraries couldn't afford someone to do the processing

We go to the regional library for technical support, for grants, etc.

What's most important? What could we afford to lose?

We couldn't do without the online catalog and courier system. (Watauga)

Processing and ordering materials, using our federal funds are all important. 50-60% of our collection comes from federal funds.

Blount also participates in shared system—but sometimes that's cumbersome; there's great disparity sometimes. Right now we need to be able to send out overdues via email, not via postage.

My system is the lone duck; what my region provides isn't what we need. I'd like courier and ILS, and staff development. But majority of libraries in my region need something else.

Other thing we're struggling with...this year we don't have a travel or a training budget.

There are such discrepancies between/among libraries.

Do all regions need to provide the same core services? Is there room to be different?

Maybe there could be hierarchies of service.

We don't need the processing; it slows us down. We can wait for reference materials so we order those through the region.

We don't use the processing at all.

I do all my ordering through Nolichucky because they work better with my County. We don't have the staff to do the processing; we can't be interrupted all the time for that.

With our County, you have to have a requisition form for everything.

Is there a core of services all regions should provide?

How would we know what other regions need? In our area I know the other libraries our size.

The service is really important—access to professional librarian, i.e., a building process.

Does the regional director attend your board meetings?

It depends on the personality of the regional director; we used to have an assistant director who would come.

We're in same region—we've had no support for the last 5 years!

I didn't see how important it is until the last 3 months when I've had the support.

We didn't have an advocate for us, someone who could speak with authority from the state.

It needs to be consistent across the board....so we know what to expect.

It lends credibility to our argument.

I'm in another region...I heard the director was expected to drive all the way to us, but people didn't seem to understand that the person might burn out if they had to do a round trip and then be in the office first thing next morning.

Are travel times between the regional center and local libraries important?

Travel is time consuming, but the regional director for Watauga could do a webinar here.

I've missed having Nancy as close when she's down in Sevierville. She's very conscious of trying to get to all the libraries.

Wonder how many boards should be in a region....(another measure for the optimal size of a regional)

What changes might be good? What services would you include if you were creating a region and starting from scratch?

You don't want to give up a child you've given birth to.

We need networking and training; and anything we could save money doing centrally.

If they centralized processing and then figured out how to get the books to the library quickly, that would work.

Do go through state contract for purchasing computers, but not paper, etc.

What about acquisition of software? We're going to open software because upgrading what we have will be too expensive.

Better and faster tech support

Courier

Wouldn't it be nice to have a public technology trainer

Nice to have true high speed internet

If we could all be on state network, we'd be happy!

Web conferencing capabilities

I've got 850 SF—no place for web conferencing!

There are usually always grants available for technology.

Talk about the question of size and whether regions need to be the same. What criteria should be used in determining the size of the regions?

Travel time

Number of libraries

Would hope somebody would look at how thin you can stretch those regional directors

What about composition—different sizes of libraries? I was unaware that there were libraries that needed basic services. Can the regions be arranged to accommodate same needs?

We have levels of libraries already, 1-5. Maybe remove the 5s from region except in certain needs...those who have technology to be able to do webinars, etc.

Regions aren't available to the public...used to have holdings, but don't any more.

Should the regions be providing outreach services? Which ones?

We do our own outreach here at Sevierville.

Chuck says that's going to be phased out anyway.

Makes sense—we'd do daycares, etc. anyway.

We'd have to borrow a county van if we did that.

Some of the Head Start teachers come to my library to supplement their collections anyway.

There's a way to do this, just need to think about it. Would vary....

Final comments you'd like to make?

This is a great opportunity to take regionals to something we can all use; take in different levels.

Another way to deal with staff—6-8 regional directors could divide responsibilities. One or two could deal with capital fundraising, etc. They wouldn't have to travel a lot, but could share information statewide. We could have teleconferencing centers in areas without a lot of technology. That could

happen at a library rather than a regional office. Get state to spring for creating the conferencing center.

I agree; it's obvious regions aren't a one size fits all. State has grown so much. This is an opportunity instead of a stumbling block!

I've been spoiled, Watauga is so atypical. Services we get are wonderful; we couldn't survive without their services....courier (10,000 ILLs last year). There have to be some changes, but I like some of the ideas...there are needs....I would hate to see people burning out because they're putting in a 60 hrs/week job. (wouldn't want regional directors to have to do that) we all work together so well in Watauga.

The one-person operation relies on their regional—don't have money or time to process the materials. Susan is great professional help with city and county. We get IT support for priorities. I like the personal feel you get from interacting with regional staff.

I like the personal aspect of a region too. We need more tech people; increase their number. I depend on regional to do my processing. Get discounts for us.

Our county has little industry; I don't see our county hiring people to process our books unless we win the lottery.

I'm in same county; we'll do whatever we have to do to keep our libraries open. Region is an important part of our everyday provision of services.

I've just found out not all the regionals are the same.

I have 600 SF...regional processing helps a lot.

I've been surprised to learn how different the regions are.

We're in consortium with academic and public libraries, but we all came together and hashed it out. I think we can all do that.

I could find space to do the processing here for the smaller libraries, if state could provide the staff person.

Interesting to hear about the differences; I started 2 years ago. Regional ladies came to my library and redid everything. I really appreciated that. Don't understand how having fewer regions would speed anything up.

We'll work together regardless of what happens.

Crossville October 19th

There were 12 participants in this session from libraries in the Fort Loudoun, Upper Cumberland, and Caney Fork Regions. They represented a wide variety of libraries, those serving very small rural communities, county libraries, libraries with branches, single facility county libraries, and libraries in counties with multiple city libraries.

What's the primary reason for regionals?

They help us do things—processing, original cataloging; consulting services, do research for me; answer political questions.

I agree.

They know the rules and regulations.

They deal with bigger issues.

Strengthen our ability to communicate in our board meetings

Serve as a funnel for funding from state and federal governments.

I always feel like they're on our side in an issue.

They work with our county commissioners and our library board; it's easy to get bogged down in day to day; they help us remember bigger things.

They share resources; move large print books around with their van.

Do the regional directors attend your local library board meetings?

(Nods)—They're one of us.

Having them at my board meeting is invaluable; we don't always know about things, we don't mean to do things wrong

We don't know all the rules

How big is too big for a regional area?

I worry about getting lost in the shuffle if regions get bigger; will we still get the same money?

They let us still have independence in our choice of collections

Each county is different in what people want to read

Regional directors are political librarians, but they're still in touch with people. We don't have time to know the politics. The recent shifting around added a lot of stress and travel times for the regional directors who took on more counties.

A lot of us know each other because we've been at regional trainings together. If you separate these relationships, it will hurt us.

But, when we get into larger groups at shared in-service sessions, we pick up a lot of different insights; we do things differently. Networking is good, but there's a bigger picture to consider.

Regionals have kept us from feeling remote and alone. Facilitated networking

The technology side of things is invaluable. Our library has new stuff, but part of this is because of answers we get from technology support. I couldn't afford to get all that locally.

When I first started I was just out of college, I knew about computers, but that was 16 years ago.

I just ask Brad, what's new, what's the best thing to buy.

Are some services becoming more important, some becoming less important?

Technology is growing in importance.

The political—budget crunch—advocacy we can't do without

Does anybody need them to label their books?

I don't see political as being as valuable; that should come from our local boards.

Our regional director isn't from our county so she doesn't know.

Outreach from regional has fallen off; we're large so it doesn't hurt us; but smaller libraries are hurting.

Is outreach service from the regional necessary?

Does that include delivery? In some cases outreach is a surrogate library. We have collections in post office, etc. for those who don't travel.

Losing the bookmobile service was a real loss. Now they keep bringing some of the things we already have.

You can't compare the services we get from regionals here with what I've experienced elsewhere. We couldn't get along without the regionals.

I worked 35 years in Montana...one of things I've found different here; here Troy does my errand for me; I used to have to do that myself.

We have to do our own errand; things could be more streamlined...things seem a bit disjointed. What the region wants in statistics isn't what comes out of (book vendors/automation). Seems like things work against each other.

Data collection form doesn't match what the county puts out. Money part of it doesn't match.

Somebody should make those things match. Gotta have statistics, but streamline it.

Problem I see is that no two regions do it alike; our region doesn't do it for us; our statistics are collected monthly...we should say what region should do...then we can choose what to do. Tell us, don't make us figure it out. Tell us what's happening.

Communication is difficult/different regions hear different things.

We're treated like children; we're informed of the decisions that have been made.

At least make the forms the same within the region.

To what degree do regions need to have same core services? How might they be different?

Technology is core; a lot of the political (I don't want to talk with senators), but book processing—I could order and process things my way. The more hands on stuff I'd rather do myself.

If you don't have many staff, it's pretty hard to do all the ordering and stuff.

State needs to look at outsourcing some of the clerical work of processing, etc.

I have to get things on the shelf faster than they come.

I thought there'd be more communication from region...they just do the processing and then we have to strip things off we don't want.

If you were starting from scratch to create a regional, how would it be different?

Technology is #1

Professional consulting is very important.

I still see a need for original cataloging.

Outreach—programming that I can have; a program I can use; I don't need book stations, I can do that myself.

These stations cut into circulation.

I could use summer reading program help.—theme, etc.

We don't do—another region has a career service for the ILL system. We just started doing ILL again because our friends are paying the postage--\$40/month. State could streamline that among the regions.

Continuing education...they could do it as a webinar; especially for paraprofessionals. That could save a lot of money.

Are there services that could be provided at a "super" region level? Which ones?

My people need basic training—what a title main entry is, filing, etc., and then reader's services.

Region could help us with our policies.

All have to have a technology plan, why couldn't there be a model out there?

Geographically it makes no sense to have regional library in Sparta and another in Cookeville, only 8 miles apart. It's not fair for the more distant counties in the region. They should be centrally located.

Would libraries across the state willing to be a center for training events? Should the State equip certain libraries to host events?

(Nods from several of them)

We sorta do that anyway.

And some libraries would still have to travel; to me one of biggest factors is the interaction with others.

But there are so many librarians who never come. Maybe they would benefit from a webinar.

But if they can't cover the desk, they couldn't sit in the back room for an hour.

I get long lists of webinars...they're there already. I need the specific stuff about an issue.

We get more out of talking with other librarians.

We pretty much do what you're talking about. Region here doesn't have space to do the webinars.

Final comments you'd like to make? Anything else?

We didn't talk about...all of us having same circulation software; Autographics is very complicated. Also worry about separating us, we rely on each other in Sequatchie...I still want the attention we get from region.

In these times it's hard to keep up with technology; great to have someone research that and let us know what's best for us; and serve as backup to answering our questions.

I agree; I'm from small library, if I didn't have their help with political and management things, I'd be lost.

We've come long way in a short while and we couldn't have done that without the region.

I need someone just to call; we have big staff, but we call the region for answers. The staff there knows our library and our system...they know our history. Get answers a lot faster. Don't have to start over every time. Big central place might let us get lost.

I want help with the things we don't deal with every day—professional standards, politics, technology.

When I see a neat idea, it gives me a level of people to ask—sounding board. Leads to innovation.

Don't lose sight that you're dealing with people that are a part of our lives. They mean something to us. These people matter to us; you're taking away what we are. We deserve answers.

I've been here only 16 months; am surrounded by wonderful people...everything is great. More work than I can handle, but I love it. When I call Faith, I know it won't go further; she's a great sounding board. Camaraderie is great. We should get together every couple of months.

You get ideas from other people; whatever state hands down, the region is on our side.

They're with us; like having extra staff members; can't put a price on it.

Region helped us narrow the number of applicants for a part time job. Make the first cut.

My county commissioners were talking budget cuts and Betty Jo came and laid into them. Regional staff stand between us and the state and local politics. They're there for us. Can't put a price on that.

Faith came up through the trenches...she knows what she's talking about.

We're not always high up for funding in the county...helps when regional people tell them the state will pull those books. (maintenance of effort)

Clarksville October 20th

There were 12 participants in this session from libraries in the Warioto, Highland Rim, and Blue Grass Regions. They represented a wide variety of libraries, ranging from a level 2 library, Moore County, to several level 5s. Some of the level 5 libraries had or were planning multiple branches. Several directors said their library had or was about to move to a higher level because of service population increases.

What's the primary reason for having regionals? Why do you need a regional?

When I need help—somebody's there to answer!

To advise and act as consultant

Training is important.

Cohesive element—keeps us all on same page

Model is based on TVA—provided for distribution of professional services when there were areas without professional services. There's less of regional staff staffing your library than once was. Now we have great diversity among the libraries...evolution has added on responsibilities for the regional staff

Biggest thing is support for my small library. I have 2 FT and 2 PT staff; limited resources so regional handles updating my technological things...we have a very understanding director...Betty Jo explains a lot of things, says this is the law, then she can advise you.

Previous mayor promised to close our doors, Becky was there to support us. Kept us open

Region came in to train my assistant director when I was promoted to director. They taught me things; I feel wiser and supported. No question you ask is treated like it's stupid.

A cooperative we've worked with has as its mission, "We make libraries better." Is that an appropriate mission for Tennessee regionals?

(Nods...)

Also just keeping everyone on the right track. Having our regional director sitting at board meetings keeps board members from going off on another track.

I've been a director for 25 years...region has helped me solve every problem.

What regional services getting more important? Are any becoming less important?

Staff training on new technology...we don't have funds to keep that up. Webinars aren't cut out to be what they say.

The technology support

Customer service training for my staff. (more important)

Technology is moving so fast that small libraries can't keep up, but we're bombarded. If a computer goes down it's tough...many people want to use it. It's overwhelming. I'm the only full time person with three part time staff...all of us do it all

Sometimes the legal aspects are something we just don't know. The job and responsibility the director has is unbelievable. We must have someone we can call. She lets us know what's going on.

We're part of county government...so we don't need some of the regional services; the issue for us is getting time for staff to travel for training. We need more training more effectively done. I don't want more talking Powerpoints (not even a talking head!) I don't expect professional training for my staff.

Book ordering is far less important for me...I have a full time cataloger. Just give me the money. We'll use vendors to do processing. There should be a more efficient way to deliver some things.

We've been doing our own cataloging for years.

It has changed so much; it's lots of copy cataloging.

We're a standalone library; who holds your server?

Sumner County holds server for the consortia.

My circ system is wearing out; region is helping us, getting those of us who need new one together, direction. They give us the information. We don't get a directive. (they don't tell us which to choose)

Our circ system makes possible the reports we give the state; if you know your system well, it'll do the report...I'd rather work with people than do the report. It would be to their advantage for the state to do those systems so the reports are easier.

If you were starting from scratch, what would you have the regional do/be?

Be a communication conduit, promote standardization of services, and provide advice

Regional director is a traveling one person show visiting in the libraries. Staff in the regional is small.

Director is like a portable advisor (has car, computer, phone, etc.) and at a level that can give advice to clients without having to go through multiple levels for authority to do things.

We have ILL, my library is a net lender; we spend a lot of money on transportation because delivery isn't standardized. Maybe we should move more toward downloadable...share those items more...readily transmittable to all the computers. People could get them from their homes.

READ is supported by only a few libraries in the state. I'd like to see that expand that to the state level.

Ebook wouldn't work in my counties; many people don't have computers. There'd be cat fights to get to the computers. Somebody wanting to fill out an employment form would have fits if someone was reading a book online.

Midwestern states got together to buy databases together. Make it TN, KY, NC, a regional consortium. Tennessee libraries have a wide range in economics; interesting to think about circulating ebooks. . Change is rapid in technology—so role of regions is to help us think/move ahead without leaving others behind.

I just want us to think longer range. Still help our patrons who are not as technologically literate too. I don't know that TN would embrace working with other states. We like our regional systems to be personal and geared toward our state.

Is outreach, serving head starts, senior centers a lower priority for regional services?

It's a service local libraries would take over. Not cost effective for region to do.

All of us visit our head starts, day cares in our county, nursing homes...(are feeding that twice...local library and regional doing)

Why couldn't senior centers come to get the books?

We just set up special cards for retirement centers, sometimes they bring residents on an outing...retirement communities already provide that.

We're trying to send out books with meals on wheels and have a book drop at some of the senior centers.

Statistics don't bear out that seniors read more; it's a fallacy that they need that service. Many have their own collections anyway. We send books to animal control and jails. Whole thing has lost its importance.

It depends on the county....we still service all those head starts.

That should be a local library responsibility. (*Nods*)

Art prints too.

Should there be a common core of services that all regions have to provide across the state?

I was hired with a teaching background and that works for 90% of what I do. But that other 10%...I don't even know the questions to ask. Region makes up that background.

I have education degree too. Region taught me about being a librarian, but I don't need so much technology—I had to know how to do a PowerPoint to graduate. Courses being offered in the Public Library Institute that the state provides are for older folks without technology.

Region is also good for our becoming a sisterhood. It worries me that if regions grow so big, they will become ineffective.

I'm close with the people who work at the regional. It would be a pain in my heart.

There are 9 counties in our region...we start monthly regional meetings with what's happening in your library. I've learned through absorbing what others have said. When changes come, we're able to handle them together. That's a strong thing...learning from each other.

TN is proud of its 3 Grand Divisions, but physically, it's a very long State! Larger libraries miss out on some of the camaraderie because we're less involved in the region.

Final comments you'd like to make? Anything else?

Next year we'll be a level 5, but I can't compete with bigger 5s. My budget will stay the same! I'll need regional support even though we'll be a 5.

We do depend on the regional director for advice and support. And technological support...we can't afford to have a technology person on staff.

The support we get goes beyond/transcends the nuts and bolts...if we have fund raisers, etc., she's there. I don't know how she has a personal life.

The support and backing we get...they're a security blanket. My budget couldn't stand my hiring all the help that we get from the regional staff. I might have to let computers go, couldn't keep them up.

Customer satisfaction...if all the regionals folded, I'd network with other library directors (in other states) with my problems.

I appreciate the regional...the technology support, we couldn't replace that; legal aspect and advice too. I've been in the business for 30+years. I've seen service grow. Regional could be changed for better, but shouldn't be changed too much...networking, technology, and support need to continue. Library levels could be adjusted too. Reassess the levels

We have limited resources; are very dependent on regional director. I can see levels being changed.

Level 5 is a wide range; I couldn't provide the services on my own. Having people I can go to is very important. We're all busy and the region can find advice for me.

Levels need to be adjusted. Staff at regions are very helpful too, not just the director

I've been the director of Williamson County Library for 31 years. We've built up over the years, but the continuity has been the regional. There should be more on what future trends will be (regional should provide more of that). I have no need, but I like having the regional director there...it impresses the heck out of my board! They don't know exactly what she does, but they're impressed. And, I like having her as a peer to whine to!

Jackson October 21st

There were 12 participants in this session from libraries in the Forked Deer, Shiloh, and Reelfoot Regions. Four indicated their library was the only one in their county while several were from counties with multiple libraries. Three were level 1 libraries. Only one was a level 5 library.

What's the primary reason for having regionals?

Small libraries don't have staff to do what needs to be done.

Support—it's like having an extra staff member. They do our processing; we have no funds or space to do that. They answer questions.

Advocacy with state and city government and county

Help with library law and policy issues, employee problems

Regional has been helping me because of staff being off; they did our cataloging and are helping with technology issues.

Library directors without MLS need regional directors.

(Jackson—Madison has 4 MLSs on staff)

Regional directors travel...develop personal relationships with us. They know who you are.

County and city officials make decisions that are detrimental to libraries without knowing they can't do that. Sometimes regional directors are heading off legal issues before they develop.

That's where the MLS comes in—they have more knowledge.

They can go directly to the state to get answers we can't.

What regional services are the more important ones?

Technology of course and being only 15 miles from my regional center, I can go there and pull books from their shelves, rotate out large print.

We can't do that at my library.

Workshops—training

Webinars are great, but you don't feel like you can jump in with questions like you can in face to face. If region gets larger, getting answers will be harder. Every library is different, each one of us has different erate questions. I'm overwhelmed.

Our funding is so different...it's overwhelming. Erate might not be worth the time it takes. Ladies at regional know how to do it.

There are more reports to do today than 5 years ago; if we lose somebody or are reassigned...getting help with technology will take longer if we're bigger.

Is the mission of the regional to make libraries better?

(Nods...)

Outreach services are clearly a good thing, but are they a lower priority as a regional service?

It'll be no priority. We haven't had an increase in years, so I have to do it all, I can't add anything else.

Is professional assistance and guidance the highest priority?

Yes

Outreach for me—I don't have money for summer reading programmers...I know I can depend upon outreach lady to do one week. Also ILL courier within region—I couldn't do ILL without that.

We don't have ILL courier in our region. Postage is iffy...petty cash generally covers that.

Humboldt has money to go out to day cares, senior centers. When I have to pay for travel, I have to cut back on books....I may have to cut back. My purpose is to get those kids to read, become better citizens. That outreach is important.

I was trying to say, that will be on bottom of ladder if we're to survive.

I can't get to all the nursing homes with the books that I have. And I don't have room for more books I have less space than she does....

If you were starting from scratch to create a regional, what services would it provide?

I could live without ordering books...just give me the money and I'll order and process them.

I'd love to order my own, have it processed—just give me order and process it.

You have the staff to process?

My budget wouldn't pay someone to process books.

We won't get as many books.

Back to scratch?

I like what we've got.

Me too

I can't think of anything I wouldn't keep.

I'd like to order myself—it would be quicker; I'm a penny pincher so I hate to pay someone to process.

If I'm in office processing, I can't be at desk.

I would keep consultant and liaison to state

And tech support—framework (2 tier) works fine---yes, yes, the handoff works, I don't have to diagnose myself.

When we had to transition from one system to another, we had computers down for a month even though we'd paid for service. That was unreal, even our techs couldn't help us. Made us realize how important our techs are.

It'll be worse if they're farther away...won't be able to jump in the van and come over.

Do all regions need to offer the same core services?

Everything we'd said is important. It doesn't matter whether you're a level 3 and level 4.

I came up the hard way and learned on the way up, but these new ones have to learn everything and don't have enough money....have to have regional to help new people.

Would it be helpful if there were different classifications? Regionals to serve them differently because they're different?

That would be helpful...I'm just barely a 4, but not half the size of the other 4s. I hate to be judged that way.

We're a 4, but we're next to Memphis—have influx from Memphis.

Talk about regional training? What works best for you?

I like for us to get together to network as part of training; getting together as a region helps answer individual problems.

People stay together; it creates another support group. Have a bond.

We discussed a patron that was causing problems in both our libraries.

Final comments? Anything else you'd like to say?

I don't know what we'd do without region; they are extra staff and family members. Most of the time Deb can talk me through solving computer problems on my own.

I couldn't afford to bring people in for workshops; state won't come to my library just for me or my staff; with regional I get the workshops I need.

Region is invaluable to me; we need to restructure and make things more uniform, but I hope it's not detrimental to me and my patrons.

Personal touch is important to me; I can pick up phone and talk. I don't have money or staff to continue; quality of service is going to fall.

Change is good, but I can speak only for this region. If it's not broke, don't fix it. We're the hearts of our community...regional staff is vital to keeping us going.

Chuck says the services that will continue: Tech support, consult services, training, erate—I won't renew if I have to do that, outreach might be done, maybe not. Cataloging I can do...

You covered it for me. In my case (5 FT employees) I don't depend on cataloging and I have own tech person, but biggest issue is that I depend on regional for policies, library law, personnel issues. If region is bigger it'll spread them thinner and I won't be able to get to them as quickly. I need immediate help when I have a policeman standing in front of me.

Accessibility, being close to them, if I lose that, I won't be able to do my job as well. I've learned so much from them.

I've been here only 4 years, but we're moving into more technology services...you don't make your children's classes bigger to do better!! It'll hurt.

I started in libraries a long time ago, but not in public libraries...I couldn't have done it without region's help. I wouldn't have my job if Carla hadn't stood by me. The consulting and technology support and training are very important.

Most important for me: professional support, especially at board meeting (but I'm new); continuing education is so important in our field. And the programming support for children's programming....

We're level 5 and don't use regional services. As part of LSSI I have best support in the world....but bigger is not always better. Carla has been helpful in getting a ruling from Secretary of State when we were having difficulty getting a response. If they're trying to save money, they're going at it the wrong way. Bigger doesn't mean you'll save money.